

## **WHAT IS A RUNNER?**

*He is one who is too small and scrawny to make the football team  
and too uncoordinated to make the baseball or basketball team.*

*This is a runner?*

*He is a reject from all other types of sports.*

*He is the one the football coach tells to put on  
a little weight and come back next year.*

*He is the one that the basketball coach tells to grow a little more  
and practice the free-throws, then come back next year.*

*This is a runner?*

*He is the one who is so dejected from being cut from all the glory sports  
that he figures he might just as well be a book-worm all his four years in high school.*

*This is a runner?*

*He may be small, tall, fat, or skinny.*

*He may be smart, dumb, or a loner, but he is not mediocre.*

*This is a runner?*

*He is the most foolish, patriotic, stupid, self-  
sacrificing, reliable, unpublicized, unglorified, painful,  
lonely, lungiest, and leggiest athlete there is in the school.*

*This is a runner?*

*He is the one who knows  
that there isn't any glory in running ten miles or more  
or pushing himself beyond the point of pain.*

*That there are no nice little blonde or brunette cheerleaders  
to stand on the sidelines and cheer.*

*This is a runner?*

*He is the one who knows that he is out there all alone  
and that he cannot blame anybody else but himself if he does bad.  
He knows he can't blame or pawn off any excuse on somebody else  
like a guard, tackle, first baseman, or forward.*

*This is a runner?*

*He is the one who gets up half asleep at the crack of dawn  
to run 15 miles or more, come back to work all day, then run again at sunset.  
He lives, sleeps and dreams running. What type of fool is this?  
This is a runner?*

*He is the one who says "no thanks" to a cigarette, or a drink of beer and whiskey.  
It is the runner who stays in on Friday night and gets nine hours of sleep  
before a meet instead of going out and drinkin' with the guys.  
He is one who ignores all wisecracks, stones, beer cans, and sticks that are  
thrown at him as he runs down the street in his gym shorts.  
He ignores dog bites, swallowed mosquitoes and bugs,  
thorns, rain, snow, blazing heat, and a stone in the shoe to keep running.  
Yes, this is a runner.*

*He is the benny who finds out that he is slow when he thought he was as fast as Jim Ryun.  
He is one who discovers he doesn't look too good in shorts and has knobby knees.  
He is a boy who sticks with it and runs 12 months out of the year to make himself better and faster.  
This has got to be a runner.*

*He is one sad boy when he discovers that all his practicing seems as though  
it is and was in vain because he still isn't the fastest one on the team.  
This must be a runner.*

*He is a senior who finds out that four years of hard, grueling, and monotonous training has paid off.  
That all the times he pushed a little harder and a little faster  
to come across the finish first, to ache so much that he falls to the ground gasping for air,  
has paid off tremendously and that he is now the fastest one on the team.  
This is truly a MAN.*

by John Guldan